

Beth Abraham Synagog Holds Annual Interfaith Banquet

The 20th annual Interdenominational Dinner was held last night at Beth Abraham Synagog in Auburn.

Chairman Maxim Scolnik introduced Rev. William Shane who gave the invocation following the singing of God Bless America by the audience. The benediction was given by Rev. Ellis J. Holt who also spoke briefly. Mayor Herbert Callahan of Auburn greeted the assembly and introduced the first speaker, Rabbi Norman Zdanowitz. He was followed by Superior Court Justice Leonard Williams of Auburn, Municipal Court Judge Alonzo Conant of Auburn and Municipal Court Judge Fernand Despins of Lewiston who spoke briefly.

In an address stressing cooperation and mutual helpfulness, Rabbi Zdanowitz, observed, "It is far better and more practical to look for ways of working together on the basis of forthright recognition of dissimilarities rather than on a fictitious assumption of identity." He noted that "the humbling thought for all religions is the realization that none has filled its promise and mission in the world."

"Mankind has come a long way to be sure," he said. "Yet how many pay homage only with their lips to faiths they profess? And how often are the fires of these faiths quenched in dark formalism

and ecclesiasticism and made the instruments of bigotry and fanaticism?"

"Judaism, which teaches us to be firm in our own convictions, also teaches us to be reverent of the convictions of others, hoping for the great day of universal recognition of all peoples."

Rabbi Zdanowitz was followed by Prof. James Miller of Bates College who introduced the main speaker, Prof. Rayborn L. Zerby, professor of religion at Bates.

Speaking on "Bases of Brotherhood," Zerby explained the inter-relationship between the different denominational groups. He outlined five major deterrents to interfaith harmony.

These are, he said, personal idealistic obsessions concerning "truth," excessive denominational pride; slogan-worship; positive remembrance of past ideological wrongs; and a false sense of "security in numbers."

He listed six goals each denomination should strive to attain. These are recognition of common likenesses, acceptance of differences, recognition of the necessity of the right kind of competition among groups, realization of present world conditions and the smallness of the present-day world, assignment of good motives to denominational action, and cultivation of active personal likings and contacts wherever possible.